



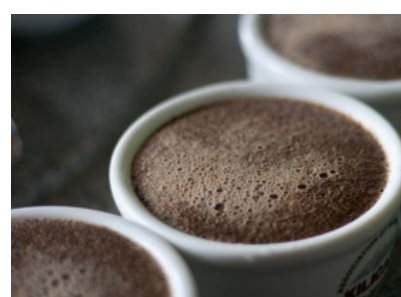
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The Relationship Information Tracking System (RITS): Building Simple Applications to Improve Coffee Traceability, Transparency and Quality

Quarter 9 Activity Report
April 16, 2012



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Title of Activity:	The Relationship Information Tracking System (RITS): Building Simple Applications to Improve Coffee Traceability, Transparency and Quality
Start Date of Reporting Period:	January 1, 2012
End Date of Report:	March 31, 2012
Date Report Submitted:	April 16, 2012

Objectives

During the months July-September 2011, Sustainable Harvest staff focused on the task *Implementation of RITS*:

- * Task 3: Technology Dissemination – After this technology has proven successful in increasing Kilicafe's competitive advantage, Sustainable Harvest will update the application with suggestions from the cooperative members and other supply chain partners. Sustainable Harvest would then like to make this technology available to other cooperatives in Tanzania, and begin pilot programs in other regions to identify how the systems will need to be adapted to cater to the special circumstances faced by coffee farmers around the world.

Our objectives during the seventh quarter were to:

- To monitor and evaluate the RITS program with Kilicafe
- To ensure the sustainability of RITS within Kilicafe
- To expand the RITS training program to five new groups and increase the knowledge of existing groups

Narrative Summary

By the beginning of 2012, all RITS washing stations closed operations as the 2011 coffee harvest came to an end. With no deliveries to track, efforts in this quarter focused on continued monitoring and evaluation of the RITS program and expansion to benefit five more RITS washing stations. With funding for the RITS Program under USAID/Compete terminating at the end of May, ensuring RITS is at optimum efficiency and a sustainable system for Kilicafe moving forward alone has been an important theme this quarter.

Monitoring and Evaluating the RITS Program

During the eighth quarter, Sustainable Harvest staff spent two weeks evaluating the RITS Program with the seven Northern Chapter RITS groups. Each RITS user was asked to complete a survey and focus group discussions were conducted with both the groups and Kilicafe leadership. During the month of January, Carly Griggs traveled with Andre Almeida to Mbinga to survey the three RITS groups in the Southern Chapter. The findings were overall extremely positive. In the South, the RITS users face no challenges associated with electricity availability since all three received solar power kits in 2011 as part of Sustainable Harvest's cost sharing and all groups



want to continue using RITS because of the increased efficiency it brings to their businesses. However, internet connectivity remains a challenge. Mahenge were often unable to access internet at the washing station and would resort back to pen and paper and then enter the data into RITS in the evening in the village where signal is accessible. Kihuka and Umoja Ilela also faced significant challenges, often losing connectivity for 2-3 days consecutively.

The ten groups currently using RITS have been isolated to participate in the project, among other reasons, due to an internet connection at the washing station, be it weak. The probability of new Kilicafe groups facing similar challenges into the future is therefore significant. Previous attempts at collaborating with local internet providers, including Vodacom and Airtel, has proved unfruitful. With external funding for the RITS Program currently not secured post-May 2012, of upmost importance is ensuring Kilicafe be left with a tracking system that is efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable. Based on initial findings, Sustainable Harvest entered into further discussion with Kilicafe and together devised an action plan for moving forward, shifting RITS offline onto a spreadsheet based system.

Based on initial findings from the RITS 2011 user surveys, the individual farmers prefer the RITS based method of tracking coffee to the traditional method because they have quick access to their individual farmer data for the whole season. They also place more trust in computer tracking than in hand written calculations. However, to determine whether the RITS program has enabled farmers to increase the quality of their coffee, their price per kilogram and therefore their livelihoods it is important to talk to the farmers themselves. Sustainable Harvest will conduct a 2011 growers survey with a randomly selected sample of producers at each RITS washing station and complete a comparative analysis against data generated in 2010. On 29th March, the Southern RITS users received training in how to use the iPad to survey individual farmers, and in early April the Northern groups will receive the same training. All surveys will be received by the end of April. Throughout this period, Sustainable Harvest have consulted Matt Innes, an M&E expert to complete the data analysis and compile a detail report to be included within the End of Project report.

Building Long-term Sustainability into RITS

Based on initial feedback generated in the RITS user surveys and focus group discussions conducted in November 2011, it became apparent that a cloud-based RITS reliant on constant internet access was not the most efficient system for Kilicafe. In January, Sustainable Harvest staff developed two business plans for moving forward with RITS with Kilicafe, one with RITS remaining online and one moving RITS offline. The advantages and disadvantages of each option in terms of cost, scalability, efficiency and sustainability were analyzed. A detailed run-through of each option was discussed with Kilicafe leadership and they jointly decided an offline version of RITS moving forward would most benefit their business model with the current infrastructural challenges. Moving RITS onto an Excel spreadsheet was the most idyllic solution since the leadership already use Excel widely, thus sharing data would be simple and capacity for training in the absence of funding is already realized.

On March 6th, the Northern RITS users were invited to the Sustainable Harvest office to introduce the concept of an offline RITS and to gather their opinions and feedback. Despite the attachment to the existing cloud-based system, all the groups were excited by the prospect of a system that did not rely on a constant internet connection, claiming it would make their work

more efficient than it had already become. Time was spent discussing features in the existing RITS the groups wanted to keep, features they wanted to change and new features they wanted to add, including tracking group membership and farm size to aid with certification compliance. All feedback was sent to the IT team at headquarters and an initial draft of RITS in Excel was ready to present by the end of the month. In addition to all the features of RITS online, RITS in excel enables to groups to conduct more detailed searches within their data, and also to complete final farmer payments at the end of the harvest. The groups in Mbinga were the first to see the spreadsheet on March 30th and provided further feedback for subtle additions, including a column to consider farmer loans to be deducted from final payments. The spreadsheet will be introduced to the Northern groups at the beginning of the next quarter and a final version complete by the end of April. Working with the groups to develop a RITS of optimum use to them will further ensure the sustainability of the system moving forward.

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	A	B	C	D	E		A	B
1	Delivery Date	Farmer Name	Delivery Person	Coffee Type	Weight	1	Delivery #	4
2	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	2		2012
3	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Cherry	12.50 kg	3	Kilicafe	
4	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	4	Sing'isi Washing Station	2012
5	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Cherry	12.50 kg	5	RECEIPT FOR DELIVERY	
6	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	6		2012
7	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Cherry	12.50 kg	7	Printed on	15/04/2012
8	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	8	Delivery Number	4
9	3/8/2012	Carly Griggs		Cherry	12.50 kg	9	Delivery Date	08/03/2012
10	3/8/2012	Ezra Spier		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	10	Farmer Name	Carly Griggs
11	3/8/2012	Ezra Spier		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	11	Delivery person	2012
12	3/8/2012	Ezra Spier		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	12	Coffee Type	Parchment (HP)
13	3/8/2012	Ezra Spier		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	13	Weight (kg)	12.50 kg
14	3/8/2012	Ezra Spier		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	14	Price/kg	TZS 2,500
15	3/8/2012	Ezra Spier		Parchment (HP)	12.50 kg	15	Total Payment	TZS 31,250
16	3/9/2012	Clemente Santiago Paz	Jorge Cuevas	Cherry	20.00 kg	16	Date Paid	08/03/2012
17	3/13/2012	Carly Griggs	Ezra Spier	Cherry	5.00 kg	17	Payment Type	Cash
18	3/14/2012	Carly Griggs	Ezra Spier	Cherry	5.00 kg	18		2012
19	3/14/2012	Joe Bloggs		Cherry		19		
20	4/4/2012	Mary Msafiri		Cherry	10.00 kg	20		
21		Debra Rosenthal		Parchment (HP)	2.00 kg	21	Producer Signature	
22	Totals				192.00 kg	22		
23						23		
24						24		
25						25	Cooperative Signature	
26						26		
27						27		
28						28		

Expanding the RITS Training Program

As stated in the no-costs extension awarded to Sustainable Harvest through May 2012, five new groups in the North became additions to the RITS Program during this quarter. After visiting ten groups with Kilicafe's Northern Production Officer, Rashid Bushiri, the final five were chosen based on interest in the project and on having a professional and honest approach to their operations. Kyeeri, King'ori, Mrimbouwo, Roo and Tumaini Farm received letters inviting them to participate in the program and all five responded positively and provided the names of two group members that would attend the trainings in April and May. A new group in the Southern chapter, Makunguru, have also been chosen to replace existing RITS group Umoja Ilela due to their non-compliance with Kilicafe bi-laws. Makunguru received a 3 day training in basic

computer skills from March 27th-29th when Carly Griggs and Chambo Augustine travelled to Mbinga.

Of importance also is to continue training existing RITS users to maintain and extend their computer skill base. On March 13th, the Northern RITS group received a second training in how to use GoogleDocs to track their washing station expenses, and from March 27th-29th, Kilicafe's Southern accountant and as well as Kihuka and Mahenge also received this training for the first time. Feedback from the Northern groups states that sporadic internet connections are preventing them from opening the online spreadsheet and it was decided dedicated one sheet to tracking expenses in the offline version of RITS in Excel would be more beneficial, storing all data together. Nevertheless, the initial training these groups have received in using spreadsheets will be invaluable to their understanding of and ability to use Excel. Mwakisole, previously Kilicafe's Northern Chapter accountant, has been relocated to the Mbeya Chapter, so on March 21st newly appointed Northern Chapter accountant Mary Mlaki received training in how to use and monitor the CPU expenses spreadsheet. She is elated by the level of technology the farmers are able to comprehend and believes this will increase the efficiency of her own work through not having to re-create spreadsheets based on hand-written data.

Chart 1: Objective, Activity, and Result

Objective	Activity	Result
Monitoring and Evaluating the RITS program	Conducting surveys with RITS users	Internet connectivity and electricity access remain boundaries to the success of RITS as an efficient tracking tool. Despite this 100% of RITS users remain adamant they prefer RITS to tracking by pen an paper because of all the added advantages it brings.
	Hiring an M&E consultant	Began the 2012 Kilicafe Growers survey after training RITS groups in how to use the iForm application on the iPad to do so. Results from the User survey and Growers survey will be analyzed and combined into the End of Project Report.
Ensuring the sustainability of RITS within Kilicafe	Meetings with Kilicafe leadership and RITS groups	An offline RITS would be easier and cheaper to maintain and will overcome issues associated with reliance on internet connectivity
	Building a more sustainable RITS	Based on continued feedback from the existing RITS users, the IT team are building an offline version of RITS in Excel. This will be complete in April.

Expanding the RITS training program	Continued training in CPU expenses tracking	All 10 existing RITS groups have now received training in how to use online spreadsheets to track their operational expenses and share them with Kilicafe leadership. All Kilicafe accountants for Northern and Mbinga chapters have now been trained in this technology and are equip to continue training new groups.
	Expanding RITS to x6 new Kilicafe groups	Kingori, Kyeeri, Mrimbouwo, Roo and Tumaini Farm in the Northern Chapter have been chosen to participate in the RITS 2012 expansion. Makunguru will replace Umoja Ilela in the Southern Chapter and received training in basic computer skills in March

Challenges

One challenge faced in this quarter involved Umoja Ilela, a RITS group operating in Mbinga region. At the end of 2011, Kilicafe informed Sustainable harvest that Umoja Ilela were taking pre-finance from the association for operations at the washing station and then selling the coffee elsewhere. Aware of the fact this group would likely split from the Kilicafe in the foreseeable future, Kilicafe asked Sustainable Harvest to train another southern group in RITS. Since all contracts for equipment are between the association and Sustainable Harvest, and not the individual groups, Kilicafe were within their rights to make this decision and arrange for the removal of all equipment, including the computer, internet modem printer and the solar power kit from Umoja Ilela and pass it over to the newly trained group, Makunguru.